

Carson delivers stinging message
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She shamed them, comparing them to "meddling" Republicans.

She called them out, right there at the Julia M. Carson Government Center at 300 E. Fall Creek Parkway, North Drive.

They had forgotten their roots, she said, in her throaty voice. Theirs is the party of tolerance and inclusiveness. The party that stands for -- ouch -- "rights, not self-righteousness." Just for good measure, she threw the book at them -- the good book. "Judge not, lest you be judged," she quoted.

But did U.S. Rep. Julia Carson accomplish her goal -- to persuade five renegade Democrats on the City-County Council they were wrong to defeat a proposal prohibiting discrimination against gays and transgendered people in Marion County?

The five Democrats misstepped. They helped kill a measure that deserved passage by usual Democratic standards.

Carson, 66, long a fave rave with the gay community, was not about to take the slap sitting down. So she stood up at the podium June 2 and read the riot act to the 100 or so people she had invited to a meeting -- 81 elected Marion County Democrats. Gay and lesbian leaders were also there.

The congresswoman put on a marvelous show. She proved she is *the* charismatic queen around whom the Hoosier Democratic hive still buzzes, demonstrating she still can sting like a bee. She summoned the party powerful two weeks in advance with mailed invitations. Others got a call just hours before the powwow.

Carson did not play her hand. Some wondered if she was going to announce that she was stepping down. Rumors of ill health have plagued her for years.

"Julia could run a marathon, and the Republicans would say she is going to die tomorrow," sourly noted Ed Treacy, Marion County Democratic chairman. She did acknowledge she had struggled with health and "other physical challenges" but that she is now "restored." She thanked those who stood by her in sickness. As for "those of you who did not offer support but sought instead to become the next member of Congress -- get over it," she said, tartly.

Then she lit into them -- judges, state reps, township top dogs, and luminaries. Her message fell hardest, however, on those Democratic City-County Council members who shot down the

proposal -- President Steve Talley and council members Sherron Franklin, Mary Moriarty Adams, Patrice Abdullallah and Ron Gibson.

Talley sat up front, where he couldn't escape Carson's eye. Yes, he looked a little uncomfortable. Both he and Gibson now say they are "open" to more information on the issue of discrimination. Talley has contacted Robert Ferguson, president of Indiana Black Pride, a gay rights group for blacks.

"I am really glad she did call that meeting," Talley said. "My issue is that I could very easily change my mind if evidence was presented to me that there was a systematic problem." Ferguson said he will assemble a round table. He foresees a dialogue. He was disappointed that Carson's confab did not result in a plan by the party.

"But the first lady certainly made her wishes known," he said, chuckling

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